

been given the additional responsibility of looking after this Block, meeting the tourists, etc., and there may be something about that part of his labors that he would like to say, as well as other things. We are glad to have President Evans here tonight.

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My Brethren, I am awed in your presence, and I express my gratitude to my Father in Heaven for my fellowship among the Priesthood of this Church. One cannot be here and not feel that there is strength in Israel, and I am deeply grateful to be ever so small a part of it. And I earnestly ask that my Father in Heaven, through your faith and prayers, added to my own, will give me utterance during the few minutes I shall stand before you here this evening.

I could not help thinking this morning, during President McKay's message, of another verse of scripture that tied in very closely with the one which he reiterated, a verse from the Psalms which mentioned a man who was greatly blessed:

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings. (Psalms 112:7.)

There are many blessings recorded in scripture which are of surpassing worth, but this particular one for our particular day impressed me as being one of the greatest: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings."

President McKay spoke this morning of the Savior's words, "Let not your hearts be troubled." I believe that in this body of the Priesthood there is less of fear of evil tidings than there is among any like number in all the world; although, it is very difficult not to be afraid of evil tidings. But I am grateful that our faith helps to sustain us in times when evil tidings are being spread about thickly. It is unthinkable that there should be talk of war, earnest talk of it, so soon after the terrible experience this world has been through. I am sure, in my own mind, that no one ever won a war—it is only a question of who lost the least or the most. And our losses in the last war are, by no means, calculated yet. But, again, I am grateful that we have here the faith which enables us to be equal to the prospects that lie before us.

THE COSTS OF WAR

There came to my desk within a few hours—this morning's mail brought it—just one indication of some of the costs of war which cannot by any means be stated in manpower or in money. One of the results—an appalling result—is the high incidence of divorce. In the United States in the year 1947—an all-time high—there were six hundred thirteen thousand divorces, as against fifty-

five thousand in 1900; and as against about five hundred thousand in 1945.

I think this subject is somewhat on my mind at this moment because of a young couple that called on us some weeks ago. One of our girls from a nearby community had married a young man from the East after a very brief acquaintance, he of another church. They had only been married a few months and they were beginning to have their problems as to which way they should go: he with her, or she with him. And they were earnestly trying to solve their differences. He was much better able to defend his faith than she was—better informed as to the letter of it—but there was something burning in her heart that made her seemingly immovable, also.

PROBLEM OF THE SPLIT HOME

I believe the problem of the split home in this Church is one of our great problems, one which we have the means and the agencies within our hands to go a long way toward helping to solve—but one which is so far-reaching in its consequences that it affects not only the generation in which it occurs, but all succeeding generations. It is a problem that requires our earnest attention. And I believe that our Ward Teachers and our Stake Missionaries, if they are given proper direction and proper help and manpower and freedom to go about their work and encouragement in it, and if they take their assignments seriously, can do as much or more than any other agency.

As we go about the Wards and Stakes in some areas, particularly in some communities, it is noticeable that there are quite a number of children over nine years of age un-baptized, which means that someone has failed in his assignment—either a parent or a ward or stake or mission officer. It cannot mean anything else.

It is difficult enough in these days to rear a family when parents are solidly united in their ideals and purposes and convictions, and in the things toward which they direct their children. But it makes it virtually impossible to be assured of any satisfactory results when parents are divided on these matters. With a divided house, principles become a matter of contention, rather than of conviction. It is not fair to any child to be pulled between two parents in two different directions, or to be asked to make his choice between two people to both of whom he is bound by ties of authority and love and affection. It makes for confusion and for instability. Too often the home that is divided becomes of home of irreligion; quite often it goes one way or the other, but in neither case is it often very satisfactory.

Sometimes there have been evidences of defection from the faith because people have gone their way in neglect and have been overlooked by us, or because we have wearied of working with them.

When this young couple came to us some weeks ago, we immediately got in touch with a former member of the faith of the young man who had married one of our girls and asked him a number of questions. We asked him, for example, "what would be the attitude of his church if someone were to marry outside or otherwise withdraw himself from activity." He said that that would be the signal for them to be more kindly and more attentive. I wonder if that should not be the cue to our own attitude and action, not only in this, but in many other things.

I am reminded of the story of the prodigal son. Certainly we must distinguish between a man who is in full duty and who is mindful of all his obligations and the man who has stepped over the line in the wrong direction. There is a distinction between them, and we cannot help but be mindful of it. But certainly, also, we must do our best to bring those who have wavered into activity with us again. The brother of the prodigal son, for whom there was no feast made, was somewhat unhappy about it, but his father explained to him that his inheritance was assured, but when the penitent sinner returned it was cause for rejoicing, and a feast was made, and he was welcomed back warmly.

I hope, my brethren, that we will keep a consciousness of our responsibility toward these children who are not baptized, who are of us, and toward these families that pull in different directions, toward all those who by every natural reason should be in full fellowship with us, but who will go elsewhere if we do not have time for them, as will our children if we do not have time for them. They will find activity, they will find companionship, they will find their place in some social circle, in some group. And if we do not have time for them, it will be in some group not of our choosing, and perhaps not to our liking.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR SEVENTIES

I should like to say one word on another subject, just for a moment, concerning the Seventies, and appeal to you Presidents of Stakes to assure yourselves of the worthiness of those whom you recommend to us to become Seventies, before you send in their recommendations, because you know them and we do not. And we of the First Council feel, and I think our other brethren here are in accord with us—and if they are not theirs is the opportunity and right to modify our views—we feel that any man who is recommended to be ordained a Seventy should comply with the standards of the Church in all particulars. We feel that, generally speaking, there is no reason why a man should be made anything other than an Elder, if he is already an Elder, unless there is some particular function for him to perform and unless he has the qualifications and the worthiness to perform that function. We are not interested, generally speaking—and there may admittedly be justification for exceptions for which we shall ask you to take

Europe. Two other brethren have been appointed, Elder Spencer Kimball and Elder Mark Petersen of the Council of the Twelve. The reports of the activities of this young woman and those who have assisted her are in their hands. It is pleasing to note that a number of girls have been saved; but some have been lost.

Recently, you received a letter, Bishops, asking that you notify these brethren of any young girls who leave your Wards for whatever purpose and go to another town. It will be necessary for the Ward Teachers and those who are in charge of the young girls—the teen-age girls to assist you in this duty. Here is an opportunity to apply the injunction of our Father in Heaven to the teachers, "Watch over the Church, always. Be with and strengthen them." No other organization in the world, I think, is so adequately equipped as is the Church to guard our young men and young women and to keep them from the tragedies of sin. Will you please cooperate with these brethren, for your own sake, for the sake of the fathers and mothers who, perhaps, have lost control of their children. The reports indicate that most of these unfortunates come from broken homes. They are tragedies.

LOST SHEEP

Another thing, once a month, through the courtesy of two County Officers, there come to my desk reports of the young men and older men who have been caught in the meshes of the law. In these reports, those who hold the priesthood are designated. Do you teachers know about them? So many Deacons, so many Priests, so many Teachers, so many Elders, Seventies and High Priests. These too may be tragedies! Remember that the injunction, "Watch over the Church, always," does not mean just once a month.

In the parable of the lost sheep, ninety-nine were safe in the fold, but one had strayed; and the Good Shepherd did not rest until the lost one was found.

I have in mind another theme, tonight, which I should like to preface with these statements: (1) That truth never grows old; and (2) that responsibility is never dis-associated from the Priesthood.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXAMPLE

To the Priesthood here assembled tonight I quote the truth and the admonition given by the chief Apostle to the members of the Priesthood over nineteen hundred years ago—that chief Apostle, my favorite, wrote this letter,

To the Elders which are among you.

I who am also an Elder, and a witness of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by overruling, but willingly, not by constraint, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples, ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger submit yourselves unto the Elders; yea, all of you be subject one to another

and be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, or rather seeth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, unto the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you. Be sober, vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished to your brother in the world.

Just one element I wish to emphasize. The instructions I give are nineteen hundred years old, yet new today and applicable as then to elders, from the chief elder. But he said, "Be an ensample to the flock." Ever keep in mind, fellow workers that *example should start at home*. That is the best place to exercise the lofty ideals of the Priesthood.

GRATITUDE FOR PARENTS

The older I grow the more grateful I am for my parents, for what they did for us children in that old country home. They lived the gospel. Father used to preach it, particularly to visitors who came, more than to us boys and girls; but both Father and Mother lived the gospel. And I have realized throughout this conference, more than ever before, that my testimony of the reality of the existence of God dates back to my childhood, that my parents' teachings and their examples led me to the absolute knowledge that God is my Father; that I received then the knowledge of the reality of the spiritual world, and I testify to you tonight that that is a reality.

It is just as easy for me to accept as a divine truth the fact that Christ preached to the spirits in prison while His body lay in the tomb, as it is for me to look at you from this pulpit. It is true. And it is just as easy for me to realize that one may so live that he may receive impressions and direct messages through the Holy Ghost. The veil is thin between those who hold the Priesthood and divine messengers on the other side of the veil.

That testimony was born in that home, because of the example of a man who lived the Priesthood and a wife who sustained him and lived it in daily life. I do not know that Peter had that in mind, particularly, when he mentioned, "Be an ensample to the flock," but I know that each home is a part of that flock. The influence you spread in your home will go throughout the town, will go throughout the county, the Wards and the Stakes.

TRUTH NEVER GROWS OLD

The most precious thing in the world is a testimony of the truth. I repeat, truth never grows old, and the truth is that God is the source of your Priesthood and mine; that He lives, that Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, stands at the head of this Church, and that every man who holds the Priesthood, if he lives properly, soberly, industriously, humbly and prayerfully, is entitled to the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. I know that is true.

STRENGTH TO RESIST EVIL

Peter admonished the young men to be careful about the sins of the world. Evil things tempt them. Now is the time when our young men are tempted. They always have been. Some have resisted and some have not, but those who have resisted have succeeded and are happy. It is the happiest life. The boys of our Church who uphold the standards are the ones who are respected and who receive honor from the men of the world as well as from those of the Church.

For the benefit of those young men who have inspired us tonight and come here in such a large body to sing the songs of the Lesser Priesthood, I am going to conclude with a story of a boy who was not in the Church—as far as I know—but he grew in his teens and using the inheritance of his father, he started in business. His father had set him a proper example. Then he found himself in financial difficulties; and in distress he went to a friend of his father's, a Mr. Chaplin. "Mr. Chaplin," said the young man, "I am in distress, and I need ten thousand dollars. Those upon whom I have depended have not paid me. Perhaps they will, but they have not to date, and I need money. I have come to you because you knew my father." "Come in," said Mr. Chaplin, "Have a glass of wine." "No, thank you," said the young man, "I do not drink." "Well, come in anyhow, and have a cigar." "No, thank you, I do not smoke." "Well, I am sorry, but I do not think I can lend you the money." "Very well," said the young man, "I am sorry." And he started to go out. "Wait a minute," said Mr. Chaplin, who had just been testing him, "Come here. Your father asked me those same questions years ago. He trusted me for five thousand dollars, and I am going to trust you for ten or five times that amount if you want it. No, do not thank me, I owe it to your father. He trusted me as I am trusting you, and I am just trying to pay him back."

Think of that, young men! Try to picture what would have happened had the boy taken his wine and taken his tobacco, just to show off in the presence of another. An example!

The responsibility of keeping these young men and aiding them is started in our homes and is never dis-associated with the Priesthood.

God help us to be true to the testimony which is ours; give us power to discharge the responsibility placed upon us when the Priesthood of the Almighty was placed upon our shoulders and given to us as an eternal endowment, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President George Albert Smith:

The next part of our program is something we may all join in, and I hope that we will. There is a wonderful hymn that is sung by the Latter-day Saints, as well as others, that refers to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord, "Come, O Thou